

— CHUPACABRAS —

The Mysterious Bloodsuckers

In 1995-96 a strange vampire-like creature went on the rampage in regions of Puerto Rico, Mexico and southern USA, killing animals and even attacking humans.

With links to UFOs and age-old fables, these 'chupacabras' incidents still defy explanation.

by Linda Moulton Howe ©1996

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There's a dangerous, mysterious beast lurking in the wilds of Puerto Rico," the San Juan *Star* newspaper announced on 19 November 1995. A similar creature that locals say punctures its victims and leaves bloodless holes made headlines in 1996 in Miami, Florida; Tucson, Arizona; San José, Costa Rica; and in Juárez and several other areas of Mexico. But it was Puerto Rico where the current cycle of vampire-like attacks was first reported.

On 11 March 1995, near a town called Orocovis in the centre of the island, Enrique Barreto Hernandez found eight of his sheep dead. Each sheep had three strange puncture holes in the chest, and the wounds were described as "bloodless". Over the spring and summer months, reports of similar attacks spread from the centre of the island to far-flung towns such as Guánica on the southwest coast, Naguabo on the east coast, and Canovanas between San Juan and El Junque rainforest. As word spread that blood was being sucked from sheep, goats and other farm animals by an unidentified creature, the Spanish words *chupar* ("to suck") and *cabras* ("goats") were put together in a catch-all word, *chupacabras*, as a name for the marauder.

By November, several hundred animals including goats, sheep, rabbits, chickens, dogs and guinea hens had been found with puncture holes which averaged about a quarter-inch wide and three-quarters of an inch deep. Veterinarian Dr Carlos Soto of Levittown, Puerto Rico, examined one rabbit that had an exceptionally deep wound. He reported that the "puncture wound was half a centimetre wide at the base of the jaw and extended about three to four inches into the base of the brain. There was no haemorrhaging either; no blood at all. I don't know what kind of natural predator could do that."

Eyewitness descriptions have varied in different parts of the island. On the west end, in the Sabana Grande and Lajas regions, there have been reports of a primate-like creature. For instance, on 21 December 1995 near Guánica on the southwestern coast, 44-year-old mechanic Osvaldo Claudio Rosado was washing his car at 3 am, but when he went to shut off the water faucet he was suddenly grabbed from behind. As Rosado tried to fight off the intruder, he was shocked to see a black-haired "gorilla", about five feet tall. The animal ran off and Rosado drove to the Tito Mattei hospital in Yauco to have doctors examine and treat cuts in his abdomen, possibly torn by fingernails or claws on the animal's hands.

I visited the University of Puerto Rico Primate Center which studies rhesus and patas monkeys now living inland. Those animals escaped from an island south of Lajas where a government research project was conducted in the 1960s. A Civil Defense investigator told me: "Back then, they didn't know those monkeys could swim. But they can, and now those monkeys live north of Guánica and Sabana Grande." However, rhesus and patas monkeys don't stand five feet tall and are basically vegetarians, not bloodsuckers.

At the other end of the island in towns such as Dorado, Aguas Buenas and Canovanas, residents have come face to face with a large-eyed creature that has red-coloured feathers or spikes from its head to the bottom of its spine. Some say the eyes glow red in the dark. Homicide detective Eliezer Rivera Diaz from Carolina, Puerto Rico, told television reporters that he watched the spikes on such a creature glow with light as it rose straight into the night sky.

The chupacabras' hands and feet are described as having only three toes and fingers but with two-inch-long nails. It is also said to have small, pointed ears and "thin, patchy or spotted hair" in shades of grey, brown and orange. "It smelled like a wet dog or like it had been in a sewer," said one Canovanas police officer who shot at a peculiar creature while it attacked his dog.

Some residents are convinced that the *chupacabras* is linked to the flying discs that are often seen in the skies above Puerto Rico. In June 1995, Mrs Enrique Gonzales and her six-year-old daughter were outside around 11.30 pm on a warm summer evening. Mr Gonzales heard both of them scream and immediately ran over to them, whereupon he saw a huge, round, glowing object. His wife and daughter told him they were watching the object when suddenly a red beam of light came out and touched the little girl on her upper right arm. Mr Gonzales reported that his daughter's skin reddened in a circle and "bubbled up" where she'd been hit with the beam.

Photographer Eddie Deese Conde, from *El Vocero* newspaper, eventually heard about the incident and travelled to the Gonzales' home. Conde told me later that by the time he got there the little girl's upper arm had several bumps, but the redness had gone.

Two months later in September, Mr Gonzales' wire chicken coop was violently torn apart and nine of the birds lay dead with bloodless holes in their necks, legs or backs. "It was the *chupacabras*," he said emphatically, "and I think it came from that UFO!"

Even though there was no direct or proven connection between the two incidents, the notorious *chupacabras* was beginning to be blamed for every animal death. Privately, many locals worried that the *chupacabras* might attack humans.

In the town of Canovanas, in the first week of August 1995, Miguel Agosta got up in the early morning to walk across the street from his home to the auto garage where he works as a



Drawing of a large, black creature with huge, round, red, reflective eyes, which computer technician Juan Murati saw as it sat in a tree near his home in Canovanas, Puerto Rico, at the end of September 1995. (Drawing by Juan Murati)

The Carolina homicide detective said he watched in disbelief as the strange, glowing animal rose into the air.

mechanic. His wife, Madalyne, was home with their children and that day she was helping her mother who lived next door. Miguel's first job was to fix a truck he had left with its hood up the night before. He said that when he got into the driver's seat to start the engine, "There was a terrible noise, a loud thumping, and then I saw a creature land on the ground near me. It was about three to four feet high and it moved in a crawling way. But then it just stood next to the cyclone fence about eight feet away and jumped straight over into the tall grass. A few hours later, my wife and her mother saw the same creature on the sidewalk in front of our house."

Madalyne Agosta told me that she was helping her mother clean her house and was washing the front window when she saw two people walking backwards on the sidewalk, not more than five feet away, with their eyes wide open as if scared. Puzzled, she continued to watch and was shocked when a "creature I had never seen before" came walking slowly in front of her on the other side of the window.

"This creature was standing in front of me for at least a minute," Madalyne said. "And the thing that really impressed me were the eyes. I get scared every time I have to talk about this because it seems to me it looked like one of those extraterrestrials that you see in movies: long, slanted eyes that were dark grey. The whole eyes were like wet Jello. It was holding two hands up kind of limply and I could see three fingers that looked human except there were nails about two inches long. The feet looked human, too, but they had only three toes separated by big spaces in between. There was a lot of mud on the feet. Going down the back were red feathers or something about four inches long. When I started screaming, that's when my mother came."

Madalyne's mother told me, "At the beginning I thought it was a kangaroo because the nose and face was kind of long and pointed out a little. But when I saw the back, I could see some red feathers that were laid down. And I looked to see if it had a tail, but it had no tail. Then I thought it was not a kangaroo. Then it just started running across the street and hid itself in the grass."

The mud and water smell suggests that the creature hides out in sewer ducts, underground caverns and springs or somewhere that is wet. The situation is even more confusing when scattered reports that the *chupacabras* can fly are taken into consideration. The Carolina homicide detective said he watched in disbelief as the strange, glowing animal rose into the air. This high strangeness in the *chupacabras* reports has provoked some investigators to speculate that the creature might even be a new biological android created by whatever pilots the discs. More terrestrial explanations have been fruit bats or flying foxes which have big wing spans—but their bodies aren't four to five feet long.

Finally, he managed to free himself and started running. Then he was startled to hear a loud noise, like a jet taking off. When Pulido turned and looked back, the creature had already mysteriously disappeared.

And what was sitting on a tree branch near the home of computer technician Juan Murati at five o'clock in the afternoon at the end of September 1995? As he explained, "I was walking to my car when I had the feeling someone was looking at me. I take a glance and I see it, and I see the big red eyes, and I say, 'Chupacabras!' And I got worried, scared."

Pointing at a tree branch about 50 feet away, Juan said, "He was right there. He was sitting upright, not hanging down like a bat, but upright about two feet tall. And he was all black, a non-reflective black, like a bat, but non-reflective. The eyes were really round, the size of oranges. And the eye colour was red like a ketchup bottle or a Coca-Cola can. Very reflective, very glassy, the eyes. I kept walking without showing the animal I had fear. Then I hear this sound, 'plah, plah, plah, plah, plah', and he's flying away."

Juan Murati has his house surrounded by a tall chain-link fence with barbed wire on top and guarded by five pit bull dogs. One day, a month after he saw the black flying creature in the tree, he found his largest and strongest male pit bull with two puncture holes in its neck.

"I came here as I do every day to feed the dogs," Juan said, "and I saw the classical vampire marks on the big dog, the male. So I went to the police and from the police I went to Mayor Chemo Soto in Canovanas. He asked me what I thought it was—if I thought it was the demon, the devil, or from outer space. All I can say is I saw what I saw and that was it."

I showed a Philadelphia vertebrate biologist (who wishes to remain anonymous) several *chupacabras* drawings I have collected, including Juan Murati's sketch. The biologist emphasised that vampire bats don't sit upright in trees and don't make 3/4-inch-long punctures. Their front teeth are sharp and the bat makes several shallow cuts on its victim's skin and then licks off the blood. He doubted the credibility of the reports because "animals fall into categories which have long been studied and are recognisable. This is like a concoction that makes no sense, and therefore I doubt the accuracy of the eyewitnesses." When I showed him Juan Murati's drawing, he guessed the creature was an owl but admitted that owls are not solid black in colour.

CHUPACABRAS REPORTS BEYOND PUERTO RICO

On 11 May 1996, Molly Moore, reporting from Mexico City for the *Washington Post*, wrote: "First came the reports of goats, then lambs and roosters, massacred in the night and drained of their blood. The only evidence of their attackers: large fang marks on the animals' necks."

But Dr Mario Santiago Lara, a veterinarian from Zapotal, southeast of Mexico City, disagrees that the wounds are fang marks. "I have never seen anything like it, ever," he told *Houston*

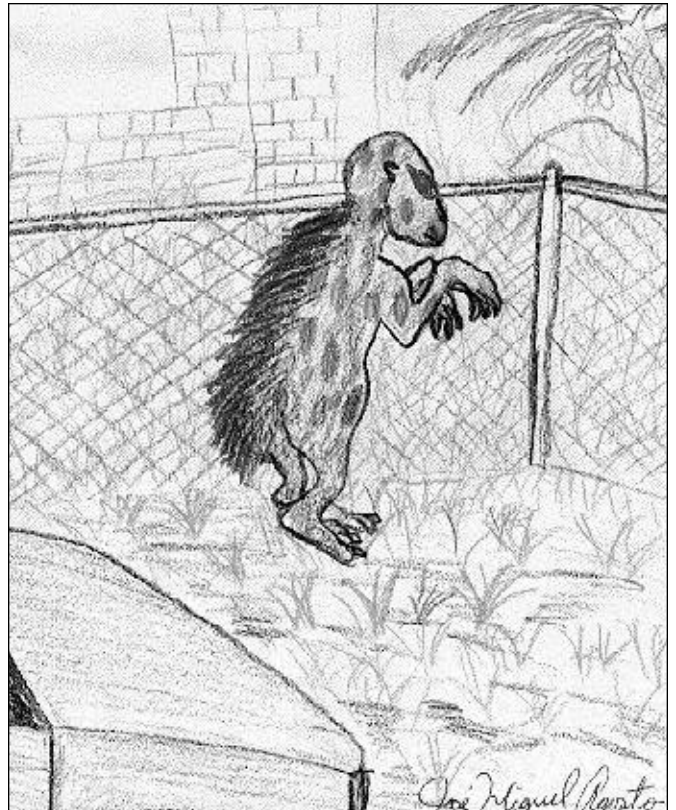
Chronicle reporter Dudley Althaus in early May. "A coyote never kills the way these sheep were killed. The coyotes and jungle cats in the area devour their prey, rip it apart. The dead sheep had only puncture wounds."

The sheep that Dr Lara referred to belonged to Violeta Colorado, a 27-year-old mother with two small children. Colorado found nine of her sheep dead in a pasture next to her house. None of the sheep had been eaten, but their throats had been punctured, leaving bloodless holes. Several of the dead sheep were taken to Villahermosa, the Tabasco state capital about 30 miles away, for further examination. So far, no official reports have been released to the public.

Mexican eyewitnesses in close encounters with the *chupacabras* report hearing a screeching sound like a wild turkey or even a sound similar to a jet airliner taking off.

In the first week of May 1996, a man named José Angel Pulido from Tlajomulco, Jalisco state, reported to doctors and police that he was walking home through the small farming community at 11.30 pm when, ahead of him in the dimly-lit street, he saw a dark shape that he first thought was a dog lying asleep. When he got closer, the dark shape sprang for his head. Pulido said he felt pain in his right arm and tried to fight off the creature with his left arm.

He said the attacker had no hair and that when he was hitting it, it felt like "a plastic bag filled with soft jelly; no bones, no muscles". Pulido also said that the shape of the creature's head reminded him of an owl's—large and round. Finally, he managed to free himself and started running. Then he was startled to hear a loud noise, like a jet taking off. When Pulido turned and looked back, the creature had already mysteriously disappeared.



Drawing by José Miguel Agosta of the *chupacabras* creature he saw early one morning in the first week of August 1995. The unknown animal leapt from a truck that Agosta was repairing. It hit the ground about eight feet away and then leapt straight up over a chain-link fence and disappeared into tall grass.



The two puncture marks surrounded by a red inflammation, assumed to have been caused by the creature's mouth sucking on Mr José Angel Pulido's arm when it attacked him during the first week of May 1996 in Tlajomulco, Jalisco, Mexico.

(Photograph from Telemundo News videotape, with their permission)

Pulido's attacker put two puncture holes, each about one-quarter of an inch wide, in his right arm about two inches above his elbow crease. A third triangle-shaped puncture was evident in Pulido's right wrist where he thought his arm had been held while the creature sucked at the puncture holes. Videotape of the wound shows a reddish ring around the puncture holes that looks like a suction mark. Pulido said he felt nauseous for about three days afterward.

Some people wonder if the *chupacabras* is beamed up into an overhead UFO, especially since eyewitnesses in Juárez, Mexico, have reported seeing silver, saucer-shaped craft and strange, small beings since January 1996.

The NBC affiliate in El Paso, Texas, sent a camera crew to investigate. In one of their reports, broadcast 27 March 1996,



Juan Murati's pit bull dog suffered two puncture holes in its neck, just one month after Juan saw the black creature sitting in the tree near his house. This dog, one of five which patrol Murati's house as protection, survived the attack. "But," Juan asked, "how did anything get to my pit bull's neck like that without a horrible fight?" The dog had no other marks on its body and there were no signs of struggle inside the high barbed-wire fence that surrounds Juan Murati's home.

several Juárez children showed drawings of what they had seen. The drawings showed round objects, some with a row of coloured lights around the middle. One nine-year-old girl drew a picture of the creature that attacked her dog as she watched. Her drawing has several similarities to the creature drawn by Miguel and Madalyne Agosta in Canovanas, Puerto Rico.

A team of Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) investigators, led by Yolika Stone of El Paso, reported that "the area is very isolated and extremely poor. The people live in cardboard and tin shacks with no electricity or running water. It doesn't seem that they could have been influenced by something on TV because they don't have access to television.

"These children told us that there were two types of beings that appeared from UFOs on various occasions: one short and one slightly taller. The beings floated to the ground by a beam of light coming from the UFO that hovered one metre from the ground.

"The children told us of another incident with their school bus. A bright light hit the bus and the bus stalled. The light came from a UFO that hovered over the bus." The UFO was estimated to be 50 feet in diameter.

"The children also told us about their animals. The dogs were put into suspended animation. There were also animal mutilations of horses, dogs, sheep, goats and cows. Apparently they were bitten and the blood was drawn out."

Over the border in Tucson, Arizona, 28-year-old José O. Espinoza of North Palomas Avenue on the west side of the city, encountered a creature in the house in the early morning of 1 May 1996. "It had big red eyes, a pointy nose, pointy ears and a wrinkled face," Espinoza said. It "mumbled something" at him and "hopped away" into his seven-year-old son's bedroom, hopped up

onto the bed and then out of the open window. Espinoza said the animal smelled like a wet dog and left footprints and handprints all over his house. He called the police who came with an unfortunate attitude of ridicule, examined a handprint on the refrigerator door and told Espinoza it was his three-year-old son's handprint.

Whatever people are seeing in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Costa Rica and southern parts of the United States, there are correlations in the historical records of recurring cycles of events involving unknown creatures which attack animals.

HISTORICAL REPORTS OF STRANGE ANIMAL KILLINGS

In the spring of 1975 in Moca, a town in the northwestern corner of Puerto Rico, "the Vampire of Moca" was on the rampage, killing livestock and scaring residents. On 15 March, the local newspaper, *El Vocero*, appealed to the government to investigate.

The first victims of "the Vampire" were

cattle. Then came a report from farmer Hector Vega Rosado who was shocked to find two of his goats dead with wounds under the thorax and above the haunches from something very sharp. The next day he found 10 more of his goats dead, seven wounded and another 10 missing altogether. He could see no blood around any of the one-inch-deep holes in the carcasses.

In 1925, the *Woodbury Daily Times* in New Jersey, USA, printed a detailed drawing by an alleged eyewitness of what was dubbed the "Jersey Devil". According to the newspaper report, a farmer found a strange beast that was consuming his chickens. He described it as being "as big as a grown Airedale with dark fur, having a kangaroo-fashioned hop; forequarters, higher than its rear, which were always crouched, and hind feet with four webbed toes. Its eyes are very yellow and its jaw is neither dog, wolf nor coyote. Its crushers in the lower jaws each have four prongs into which the upper teeth fit perfectly."

In December 1993, a park ranger named John Irwin was patrolling the Wharton State Forest in New Jersey. He reported that he "noticed a large, dark figure emerge from the woods. It stood like a human, over six foot tall, and it had black fur that looked wet and matted."

The official Forest Service report about the incident continued: "John sat in his car only a few feet away from the monster. His initial shock soon turned to fear when the creature turned its deer-like head and stared through the windshield. But instead of gazing into the bright yellow glow of a deer's eyes, John found himself the subject of a deep glare from two piercing red eyes."

In Europe and other countries, fables about mythical beasts of horrible form which attack people and animals have been passed down through the centuries. And back on the island of Puerto



José Angel Pulido from Tlajomulco in Jalisco state, Mexico, showing a Telemundo television reporter the puncture marks in his arm after the attack in early May 1996. (Photograph from Telemundo News videotape frame, with their permission)

Rico there is the tradition of the *plena*—songs which describe a "terrible animal" having an ox's head, a bull's horns and a serpentine tail. One of these songs implores, "Free us from all evil; protect us from this terrible animal".

What are these strange creatures that seem to 'recycle' themselves through the centuries? Are they some unknown, underground life-form that cohabits with us, the surface life of this planet? Do they come from UFOs, despatched like worker bees to gather tissue and fluids as part of some unknown agenda? Or do they slip into and out of an unimaginable place, another time, another space beyond this dimension? Whatever their origin, they have left behind hard physical evidence in the foreheads, necks, backs and stomachs of animals, both dead and still living. And thousands of people are afraid to go out after dark.

POSTSCRIPT

There have been no other reports of *chupacabras* attacks on humans since those May 1996 incidents described in this article, and puncture attacks on domestic animals have almost ended for unknown reasons. As quickly as the mystery began in March 1995, it seems to have come to an end, or at least a pause, in the summer of 1996.

About the Author:

Linda Moulton Howe is a graduate of Stanford University, USA, and has a Masters Degree in Communication. She has devoted her film/TV career to documentary and studio productions on science, medicine and the environment. Her documentaries, *A Strange Harvest* and *Strange Harvests 1993*, explored the worldwide animal mutilations which have been ongoing since the late 1960s. She has written several books, including *An Alien Harvest* and *Glimpses of Other Realities*, vols. I and II. Ms Howe's investigations have taken in such diverse subjects as the crop circles phenomenon, the evidence for UFOs and ETs, humanity's hidden history and, more recently, the *chupacabras* mystery.

For further information about the author's books and documentaries, contact LMH Productions (see details at the beginning of this article).



Drawing of the "Jersey Devil", based on an alleged eyewitness close encounter. It was published in a 1925 edition of the *Woodbury Daily Times*, New Jersey, USA.